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## Minnesota's census response rate: above average ... of course

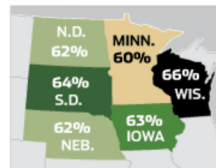
**And six cities are among U.S. leaders; yet, some glitches are slowing returns**

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### Minnesota's slice

While Minnesotans are ahead of the national average when it comes to returning their 2010 census forms, they trail neighboring states' participation rates.



National average:	52%
Highest: Wisconsin	66%
Lowest: Alaska	41%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
PIONEER PRESS

While Minnesotans are outpacing much of the nation when it comes to filling out U.S. census forms, people are noticing some hiccups in the system.

Some say their forms were addressed to the wrong cities. Others say they didn't even get forms.

"By whatever omission or glitch, some people didn't receive one. We're working with residents," said Luz Maria Frias, director of St. Paul's human rights and equal economic opportunity department.

Communities across the country are urging participation because so much is riding on census results, such as allocations of federal money and seats in Congress.

By Thursday's filing deadline, the U.S. Census Bureau reported Minnesota at 60 percent was above the national average — 52 percent — for households that have mailed back their form.

At the same time, Minnesota trailed neighboring states, with Wisconsin at the top early Thursday.

Six Minnesota and three Wisconsin cities were among the top 50 with the best return rates. The Minnesota cities are Maple Grove, Coon Rapids, Minnetonka, Bloomington, Woodbury and Apple Valley. In Wisconsin, Eau Claire, Oshkosh and Waukesha made the list.

If you haven't returned yours yet, don't worry. "There's still time," said Lisa Cochrane, public affairs specialist for the Census Bureau.

Although Apple Valley had a 62 percent return rate, Mayor Mary Hamman-Roland said the city is hearing from residents who did not get a form.

She said while it's too early to tell why, places such as newer senior and other multi-housing units seem to have the most problems.

"When you've got a community that is still growing, you're going to have new buildings. It's entirely possible that it doesn't reach everyone," Hamman-

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Roland said. "We're taking extra care to make sure all these new areas are counted."

Woodbury also had a return rate at 63 percent. However, there was confusion for residents in the 55125 ZIP code, Mayor William Hargis said. Some Woodbury residents received census forms that used St. Paul in the address.

Hargis said the 55125 ZIP code is part of a St. Paul post office substation, so the address is listed as St. Paul. However, the bar code on the form designates the correct community, allowing the Census Bureau to correctly distinguish Woodbury households.

St. Paul, with a 54 percent return rate as of Thursday, has posted census information on its Web site, fielded calls from residents and promoted census participation.

"Folks should know that they have resources within their community to get a form," Frias said.

The U.S. government's attempt every 10 years to count every person in the country could determine where \$400 billion in federal funds go annually. In Minnesota, 2010 census figures also could determine whether the state loses its eighth congressional seat.

The Census Bureau has launched a record \$340 million effort to encourage an estimated 308 million people to participate.

Unlike the 2000 census in which some residents received a short form while others got a 53-question form, the 2010 census has the same 10 questions for everyone. Questions include name, age, birth date, gender and race. The form also asks for the household's income level and whether the

occupants rent or own.

"We tried to keep it simple because we know people are busy," Cochrane said.

She said every 1 percent increase in participation saves the U.S. government \$85 million in costs associated with the census, including the cost of workers doing follow-up door-knocking.

Census workers plan to knock on doors April 23 through July at places that have not returned a form. Census, county and city officials also are busy getting forms to those who never saw one in the mail.

The Census Bureau has set up Questionnaire Assistance Centers, or QACs, in neighborhoods.

The centers can be found online at [mn2010census.org](http://mn2010census.org). Residents who are unable to pick up a form can contact the state demographer's office at 651-201-2479.

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